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**THE DIRECTOR OF
CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE**

Deputy Director for National Foreign Assessment

15 FEB 1980

**MEMORANDUM FOR: The Honorable Zbigniew Brzezinski
Assistant to the President for
National Security Affairs**

**SUBJECT : Soviet Activities Affecting US
Interests**

This is the third in a series of reports that chart the USSR's actions to advance their interests abroad. It gives special attention to those activities that either seem deliberately designed to counter US policy or have the potential for developing into issues inimical to US interests.



Bruce C. Clarke, Jr.

**Attachment:
As stated**

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
National Foreign Assessment Center

15 February 1980

MEMORANDUM

SOVIET ACTIVITIES AFFECTING US INTERESTS

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Summary

The USSR's determination to contain the worldwide reaction to its invasion of Afghanistan and to maintain its sizable ground force presence there has been accompanied by efforts to refute US criticism of Moscow's actions and to place responsibility for the deterioration in Soviet-American relations on Washington. The Soviets are trying to convince an international audience that the crisis atmosphere that currently exists is due to deliberate US policies that are designed to advance US hegemonial interests and to influence domestic politics in an election year in the US. With the deterioration of Soviet-American relations capped by the Afghanistan crisis, Moscow is clearly stressing propaganda confrontation with the Carter administration over US defense policies, particularly with regard to the Middle East and the Indian Ocean.

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Moscow's major effort has been one of damage limitation. The Soviets are trying to avoid or dampen war scares in Iran, Pakistan, and Yugoslavia, and to deflect Islamic criticism of Soviet actions in Afghanistan. The Soviets are aggressively countering charges that they have designs on Iran or the Persian Gulf and are trying to refocus Arab attention on the primary target, i.e., the US as the "enemy of Islam" and the supporter of Israel. The Soviets are also trying to maintain West European interest in detente and to divide the US from its West European allies.

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The USSR, Afghanistan, and the Middle East

The USSR is concerned, and possibly even surprised, over the Moslem reaction to its intervention in Afghanistan and as a result has decided to strengthen its ties with the only Arab states unwilling to attend last month's Islamic conference in Islamabad--Syria and South Yemen. In the wake of the conference, the Soviets mounted a public and private effort to blunt criticism of Soviet policy in Afghanistan and to emphasize the danger the US represents for the Islamic community. Soviet tactics suggested a decision in Moscow to write off the moderate Arabs at least for the time being and to play to the more radical members of the Steadfastness Front. [REDACTED]

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As a result, the Soviets have maneuvered to give at least qualified support to the Syrian decision to redeploy forces in Lebanon, which the Soviets may view as a device to increase Arab-Israeli tensions and thus reduce Arab preoccupation with Afghanistan. Foreign Minister Gromyko arrived in Damascus on 26 January, only three days after the first movement of Syrian forces. [REDACTED]

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Current Soviet efforts for expanding influence in the Arabian Peninsula hinge on the politics of unity of the two Yemens. [REDACTED]

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Within South Yemen, the Soviets are making intensive use of facilities there and Soviet advisers are now at most levels of the South Yemeni military. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Moscow has stepped up developmental aid, no doubt to improve the images of itself and the unpopular Ismail. Additionally, [REDACTED] all the media in South Yemen are now under direct high-level control. [REDACTED]

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In the weeks to come, the Soviets will certainly try to focus Arab attention on the Egyptian-Israeli peace process, portraying critics of Soviet action in Afghanistan as dupes of the US. The Soviets can be expected to expedite arms deliveries to Syria and to reassure Syrian [REDACTED]

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President Assad of Soviet backing in the event of an Israeli attack.

The USSR, Afghanistan, and Asia

In the wake of their invasion of Afghanistan, the Soviets have taken steps to improve relations with the most anti-US and anti-Chinese states in the area--Vietnam and India--and have strengthened their naval forces in the Arabian and South China seas. Gromyko arrived in New Delhi on 12 February to begin an intensive effort to tie India more closely to the USSR and to affirm Moscow's "limited" objectives in Afghanistan. Gromyko presumably discussed various offers of assistance that were made to India during Premier Kosygin's visit in March.

Gromyko probably played on Indian fears of a new US armaments commitment to Pakistan in order to make sure that, as a result of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, there is no improvement in Indian ties with the US or China.

The Soviets may also have calculated that their decisive use of force would convey to Beijing the limits to the value of closer Sino-US ties in aiding China in any future Sino-Soviet military confrontation. More specifically, they may have intended their invasion, in combination with steps toward the strengthening of Soviet-Vietnamese relations, to deter Beijing from a second attack on Vietnam.

The visits to Vietnam by Commander-in-Chief of the Soviet navy Sergey Gorshkov in December and candidate politburo member Masharov in January also demonstrated Soviet support for Vietnam in its dispute with China. In an allusion to Moscow's now continuous naval presence in the South China Sea, Gorshkov publicly implied that Soviet military forces would support Hanoi in any new conflict with China.

Gorshkov's visit may have arranged greater Soviet military access to Vietnamese facilities, which are already allowing the Soviets to maintain close observation of US naval activity in the South China Sea.

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The USSR, Afghanistan, and Europe

The Soviets have begun to cancel or postpone long-scheduled exchanges between East and West in order to signal West European governments that they cannot expect to conduct business as usual with Eastern Europe while taking punitive measures against the USSR for its invasion of Afghanistan. On 23 January, Czechoslovakia--in obvious deference to the Kremlin's wishes--indefinitely postponed a visit this month by West German Foreign Minister Genscher, and East Germany postponed without explanation a preparatory meeting to settle details for a summit between East German leader Honecker and Chancellor Schmidt. In previous negotiations with the West Germans on other issues, East Germany had seemed willing to insulate inter-German relations from the worsening international climate.

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Exactly one week later, the East Germans postponed the Honecker-Schmidt meeting until later this year and Hungary abruptly postponed the visit to the US of Politburo member Antal Apró only hours after Apró's aide had discussed details of the visit with US officials. The Hungarians also postponed Foreign Minister Puja's trip to West Germany in February.

Moscow clearly wants to convey the impression that its Warsaw Pact allies strongly support Soviet policy and that any effort by the West to split Moscow from its allies will not be tolerated.

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Soviet party secretary Suslov's speech to the Polish party congress and Gromyko's hastily arranged visit to Bucharest pointed to Moscow's concern for solidarity within the Warsaw Pact on Afghanistan. the talks with Gromyko were "difficult" and "strained," and various Romanian statements indicated that Gromyko failed to silence Bucharest's criticism of the Soviet invasion.

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Meanwhile, the Soviets have adopted an ambiguous stance toward the Schmidt-Giscard summit. They have warned that the Europeans cannot support US actions against the USSR and have detente in Europe, but at the same time they have blamed the US--rather than France and West Germany--for the continuing international tension over Afghanistan. The Soviets are claiming that the meeting demonstrated Schmidt's and Giscard's commitment to detente, while the US was deliberately jeopardizing it. Moscow clearly wants to divide the US from its allies in West Europe and is particularly concerned not to burden its relations with key West European states more than necessary.

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With their relations with the US at low ebb and the SALT process in limbo, the Soviets may eventually decide to turn to West Europe rather than to Washington in an effort to develop a disarmament posture that

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will help the USSR live down its invasion of Afghanistan. Continuing West European doubts about NATO's TNF decision provide some fertile ground for Soviet diplomacy and propaganda. But for their "European card" to be effective, the Soviets may find that they will have to reach compromises with West European preferences on security issues. A test of whether this approach will be adopted will take place next month, when Gromyko is scheduled to visit Paris. Gromyko may be more accommodating than he has been in the past to the French proposal for a separate conference on disarmament in Europe subsequent to the CSCE session scheduled for Madrid later this year. [REDACTED]

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The USSR, Afghanistan, and the Nonaligned

The Soviets have lost some standing in Latin America and Africa over the invasion of Afghanistan, but they have gained from the refusal of Argentina and Brazil to join US efforts to restrict grain sales to the USSR and from Zambia's willingness to conclude a significant arms deal. Both Argentina and Brazil criticized the Soviet action, but trade considerations and a desire to show independence from the US outweighed any interest in joining a common international effort to isolate the Soviets. Jamaica condemned the Soviet move, but immediately indicated that it anticipated no long-term change in its policy of friendliness toward the Soviets; Nicaragua muted the issue in local media and went ahead with arrangements to set up a Soviet mission in Managua. The invasion will probably dampen the development of Soviet ties with both Panama and Columbia, but the Soviets probably anticipated an even sharper reaction in Latin America than actually occurred. [REDACTED]

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Zambia's willingness to conclude a new arms agreement with the Soviets in the wake of their invasion of Afghanistan is in strong contrast to President Kaunda's previous efforts to keep the Soviets at a distance and particularly to criticize what he considered aggressive behavior. The military accord reportedly involves as much as \$75 million worth of equipment, including MIG-21 fighter aircraft and SA-3 surface-to-air missiles. The deal represents Moscow's ability to exploit Kaunda's fear of continuing instability in the region, including possible border penetrations by both South Africans and Zimbabweans. The deal could also lead to an increase in the Soviet and East European advisory presence in Zambia. [REDACTED]

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